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MISCELLANY

SOME NEW BOOKS ON ART

George Frederick Munn was a talented painter born in Utica, N. Y. who studied art in London, took a gold medal in the Kensington Art Schools and a silver medal in the Schools of the Royal Academy—both medals for sculpture. After transferring his affections to painting he went to Paris and entered the Julien Academy, worked under Michael Munkacsy as an assistant and soon began to exhibit at the London picture shows. His work attracted the attention of George Frederick Watts who was one of the young American's art divinities. Seeing a copy by Munn of one of his own paintings Watts remarked: "I must have that man to work with me" and so it was, for Munn was soon engaged in the British painter's atelier in relations that recall the old methods of master and disciple, relations that produced much fine painting in the days before art schools were organized. While with Watts he saw a good deal of Charles Keene and George du Maurier. In Venice at the hospitable board of Mrs. Arthur Bronson he met Robert Browning and other literary and artistic lights who enjoyed the singular, warm-hearted friendship of that hostess. Browning said to him once, apropos of the Browning Societies: "Why, anybody can understand what I mean—except some of those early things—and I myself depend a good deal on these Browning Societies for much that is new to me in some of my early work!" He returned to America in 1887 and married Margaret Crosby of New York in 1900. It is she who has prepared the handsome volume "The Art of George Frederick Munn" published by Dutton. Very touching in their affection and simplicity are some of the pages in which she registers the written and spoken thoughts of her husband. He died in 1907.

The volume includes quotations from artists and writers who appreciated Munn's thorough and sincere work in oils and black and white, his landscapes and genre pictures and portraits, and it has an introduction by Johnston Forbes-Robertson. "His was a rare spirit—a steadfast one—and always unflinching true to the highest standards of his art. No petty trafficking or time-serving in his work ever dimmed his soul. He had the rare courage to paint to please himself first, and the public and the buyer—well, they did not count!" The Metropolitan Museum should have one of his large canvases, such as "Brittany" shown at the Paris Salon in 1892 and a figure piece like "Harmony in Rose and Blue" painted in 1888.

The Lippincotts in Philadelphia and Heinemann in London have issued a book of reproductions after lithographs and drawings by Joseph Pennell that cannot fail to furnish in after time a reference for which the historian of the Great War will

be grateful. It is a record by an able draughtsman and etcher of a series of the munition works in England as they are to-day, some of them old factories remodeled for the output of the dreadful implements of modern war, others built expressly for the purpose. Mr. Pennell's drawings of the Panama Canal before the water was admitted give some idea of his power of investing the sordid haunts of machinery with a certain grandiose charm, of extracting the picturesque from disorderly impromptu buildings—if not from chaos.

Mr. Pennell had the authority of the British government to visit the great shops where shells and guns are forged, although it appears from what he says that he does not believe in war—perhaps he has Quaker blood—and he has procured a few pages of introduction from Mr. H. G. Wells who can scarcely be accused of peace at any price. A very combative person like Mr. Pennell may theorize beautifully until somebody hits him a "nawsty blow" as they say in England—when presto! his Quaker ancestry disappears and his original Satan, lulled for a few generations, erupts and starts him fighting just like any ordinary man.

He has retrieved two complimentary words from the workmen who inspected his drawings—*bonnie* and *champion*. "One manager told me he did not know if my picture was a great work of art, but he did know that to him it was a great puzzle." But there were other managers more appreciative.

Some of the night scenes are among the best of these lithographs, such as "The Shops at Night" (place not stated) "In the Jaws of Death, Rolling Bars for Shells" "Furnaces at Night" and "Shot"; but the sketchy, smoke and cloud-filled views of "Munition Town" "Munitions River" "Five O'clock" (workers dispersing) "Peace and War" have great charm of aerial perspective. Pennell has notes on each print. For the last named he says: "What would Ruskin have said to this? The beautiful old abbey built in, surrounded by, yet dominating the munitions factories? What would he have said to the aeroplane noisily soaring over it?"

On "Shops at Night" he comments: "Black was the bridge, black the crowd crossing it, black the crowded trains. The blue-white light glowed from the ever-working shops and the lights upon the cranes by the river-side and on the railroad tracks suggested the workscape (*sic*) by their ever winking, twinkling lines and groups and dots and masses of lamps." One could wish that he had not been so sparing in these notes.

COMPETITION FOR A CIVIC VIRTUE

The National Sculpture Society and the Beaux Arts Institute of Design, both of New York, have appointed delegates to arrange for a competition among sculptors and architects for a statue or